

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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R EPQRRPZ AUG 73

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INFO AMCONSUL MUNICH

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TAGS: PFOR UR US

SUBJ: SOVIET PRESS TREATMENT OF U.S.

1. THERE ARE SIGNS THAT THE POST-SUMMIT HONEYMOON FOR THE US IN THE SOVIET PRESS IS COMING TO AN END AND THAT THE SOVIET PRESS IS BEGINNING SHIFT TO A FORMULA WITHIN WHICH IT CAN BALANCE SUPPORT FOR DETENTE WITH THE US WITH MORE LATITUDE IN CRITICAL OR NEGATIVE REPORTING ABOUT US DEVELOPMENTS.

2. IN THE LAST THREE WEEKS SOVIET PRESS HAS BEGUN TO INCREASE CRITICAL COVERAGE OF US AFFAIRS. NEGATIVE OR CRITICAL REPORTING REMAINS RELATIVELY MUTED AND APPARENTLY RESTRICTED IN VOLUME AND SCOPE, BUT IS TAKING A MORE PROMINENT PLACE IN THE GENERAL COVERAGE OF

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US AFFAIRS. AMONG RECENT ITEMS HAVE BEEN ARTICLES ON RACIAL TENSIONS (IZVESTIYA AUGUST 28 AND PRAVDA AUGUST 29), ON LABOR STRIFE (SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA AUGUST 29), PROBLEMS ON INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT (NOVOYE VREMYA AUGUST 24) AND A PHOTO PAGE WITH NASTY INNUENDOS ABOUT US EXPLOITATION OF PUERTO RICO (NOVOYE VREMYA AUGUST 24). LABOR LEADER GEORGE MEANY WAS LAMPOONED AS A COLD-WARROR IN A PRAVDA CARTOON AUGUST 21. CRITICAL ARTICLES HAVE APPEARED ATTACKING STUART ALSOP, GENERAL GOODPASTER, AND DEFENSE SECRETARY SCHLESINGER FOR HOLDING "COLD WAR" POSITIONS INCONSISTENT WITH THE PRESENT IMPROVEMENT IN US-USSR RELATIONS. THE CRITICISM OF SCHLESINGER IMPUGNED HIS MOTIVES AS BUDGET-RELATED, BUT FAILED TO INFORM SOVIET READERS OF THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS MIRV DISCLOSURES.

3. CURRENT LINE IS ILLUSTRATED IN LENGTHY ARTICLE BY USA JOURNAL EDITOR V. BEREZHKOVA WHICH APPEARED LIT GAZ AUGUST 29. BEREZHKOVA REITERATES THAT US DECISION TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES RESULTED NOT ONLY FROM CHANGED BALANCE OF WORLD FORCES BUT ALSO FROM THE IMPACT OF CHRONIC DOMESTIC PROBLEMS ON US FOREIGN POLICY. BEREZHKOVA CONCLUDES THAT PROSPECTS FOR CONTINUATION OF PRESENT US POLICY ARE GOOD BECAUSE SAME DOMESTIC PROBLEMS WHICH FORCED INITIAL ALTERATION OF US POLICY REMAIN UNRESOLVED AND THEIR CONTINUATION WILL LEAD FUTURE ADMINISTRATIONS TO SEEK POSITIVE RESULTS IN FOREIGN POLICY WHICH ARE POSSIBLE ONLY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE USSR.

4. COMMENT. BY PRESENTING US DOMESTIC PROBLEMS, E.G. RACIAL TENSION, YOUTH UNREST, ECONOMIC CRISES, URBAN PROBLEMS ET AL., AS FORCES FOSTERING PRESENT IMPROVEMENT IN US-SOVIET RELATIONS, SOVIET REPORTING OF US DIFFICULTIES CAN BE TREATED AS EVIDENCE OF US NEED FOR DETENTE WITH USSR. SIMILARLY, SOVIET PRESS RETAINS OPTION OF DECLARING OPEN SEASON ON US POLICIES AND /OR FIGURES WHICH IT MAY CHOOSE TO DESIGNATE VESTIGES OF "COLD WAR" ERA OR SPOKESMEN FOR FORCES OF "REACTION".

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